

# ACTION

PICTURE  
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No. 17 1/3



**BIG NEWS!  
8 EXTRA PAGES!**  
Two exciting  
stories.

# SCOOP!

# MEN OF ACTION...

who displayed cool courage in the face of death

Sergeant Len Birnie was a member of an R.A.F. Shackleton crew taking part in night training exercises in Scotland. On January 10th, 1958, Birnie's aircraft was flying over the Morayshire hills when a violent storm broke over them. The storm heightened to a gale which threw the Shackleton out of control into a steep hillside. By a miracle none of the crew died in the crash and badly shaken they clambered out of the shattered and burning fuselage. But not everyone had escaped. Too weak to move, an injured



man had collapsed against the burning wreckage. It was Sergeant Birnie who discovered that one of them was missing. He immediately went back to the wreckage and saw the man slumped between two burning engines. Ignoring the roaring flames, and the fact that the fuel tanks would erupt at any second, Birnie half-carried and half-dragged the man to safety. It was the act of a very brave man and Sergeant Birnie was awarded the George Medal for his heroism.

# Scoop!

"A WING AND A PRAYER"... A PHRASE COINED DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR TO DESCRIBE THE FLIGHT OF A BADLY DAMAGED PLANE. HOW MUCH MORE SO DID IT DESCRIBE ALL FLYING IN THE PIONEER DAYS BETWEEN THE WARS.

HA, THE  
LINE TO TROYES!  
I CAN'T GO WRONG  
IF I FOLLOW  
THAT...



GALE FORCE WINDS AND DRIVING RAIN BATTERED THE DH4  
AND SOAKED ITS PILOT, DON MANNION, TO THE SKIN ...

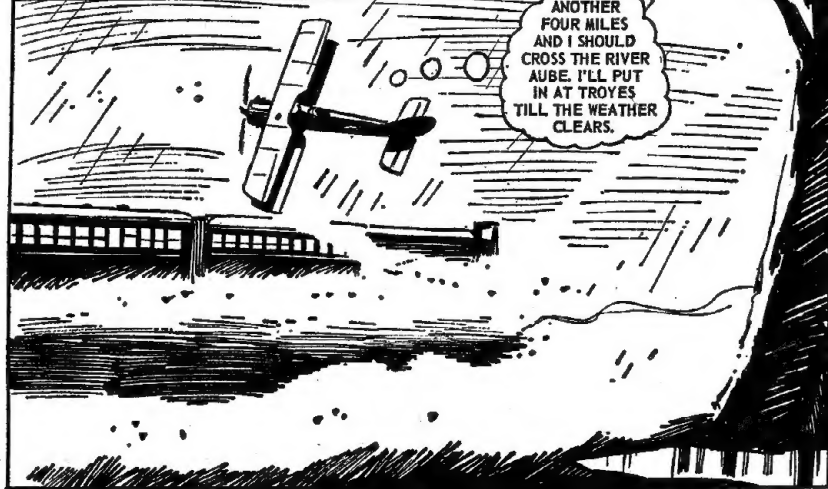
HOLY MOSES!  
WHAT WEATHER!  
IF I LOSE SIGHT  
OF THAT TRACK,  
I'M DONE FOR...

FORCED TO ZERO FEET BECAUSE OF THE VISIBILITY, DON ALL  
BUT FLEW INTO THE REAR COACH OF A PASSENGER TRAIN...

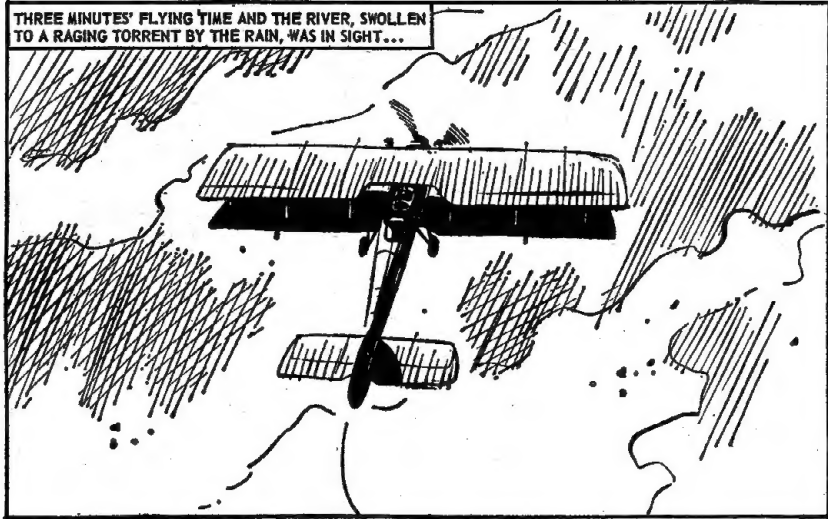
BLAZES!

THE DE HAVILLAND 4, RECENTLY BOUGHT AT A WAR SURPLUS SALE IN DIJON, SKIMMED OVER THE CARRIAGE TOPS... AND DROVE ON...

ANOTHER  
FOUR MILES  
AND I SHOULD  
CROSS THE RIVER  
AUBE. I'LL PUT  
IN AT TROYES  
TILL THE WEATHER  
CLEARS.

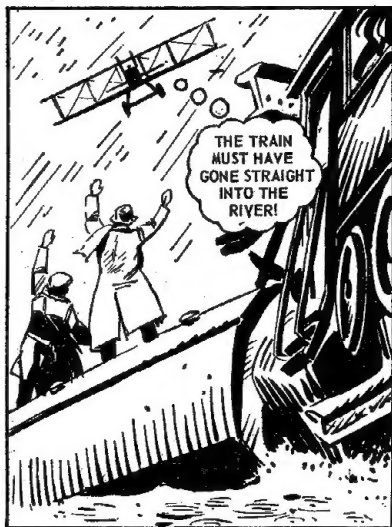


THREE MINUTES' FLYING TIME AND THE RIVER, SWOLLEN  
TO A RAGING TORRENT BY THE RAIN, WAS IN SIGHT...





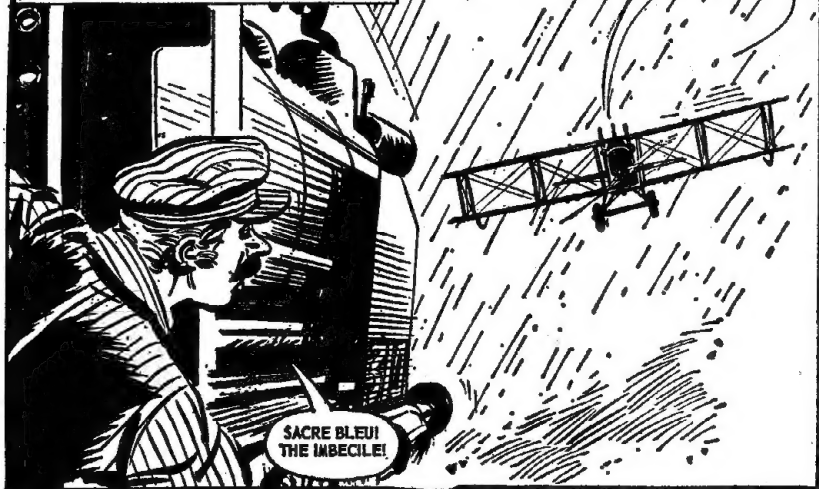
AND THEN DON MANNION SAW THE BRIDGE...OR WHAT WAS LEFT OF IT... AND SOMETHING MORE...



AND THEN HE REMEMBERED THE EXPRESS, ROARING OVER THIS SAME LINE AT SOMETHING LIKE 60 M.P.H.



BACK DOWN THE LINE THE DH4 SPED... APPEARING  
OUT OF THE RAINSTORM LIKE A BAT OUT OF HELL.



SACRE BLEU!  
THE IMBECILE!



SPARKS SPLUTTERED FROM  
THE WHEELS AS THE BRAKES  
WERE APPLIED. THE  
PLANE BANKED AWAY...

AROUND IT CAME AGAIN... ACROSS THE TRACK, ONLY YARDS IN FRONT OF THE POWERFUL LOCOMOTIVE.

COCHON!  
DOES THE FOOL  
WISH TO COMMIT  
SUICIDE?

BACK AND FORTH WEAVED THE DE HAVILLAND,  
FORCING THE ENGINE DRIVER ALL THE TIME TO  
APPLY HIS BRAKES.

THE AVIATEUR...  
HE SEEMS TO WANT  
YOU TO STOP THE  
TRAIN, JEAN-PAUL.

MORE LIKELY  
SOME BIG-HEADED  
FOOL TRYING TO SHOW  
OFF IN FRONT OF  
OUR PASSENG —  
MA FOI!





A HUNDRED YARDS FROM THE RAILWAY TRACK,  
THERE WAS A STRETCH OF FLATTISH MEADOW...

I'D  
BETTER  
SEE IF THERE'S  
ANYTHING I  
CAN  
DO...



DON CUT THE MOTOR  
JUST AS THE ENGINE  
DRIVER STOMPED  
TOWARDS HIM.

M'SIEUR...  
A THOUSAND THANKS!  
YOU PREVENTED  
A DISASTER!

IT LOOKS  
LIKE THERE'S  
ALREADY BEEN  
ONE....



PASSENGERS BEGAN TO CROWD FROM THE EXPRESS  
TOWARDS THE SCENE OF THE WRECK.



RESCUERS WERE ALREADY TRYING TO REACH THOSE  
TRAPPED IN THE SHATTERED COACHES...

THERE  
ARE MANY  
TRAPPED IN  
THE COACH  
DOWN  
THERE!

OUI,  
WE NEED  
LIFTING CRANES.  
THE NEAREST  
IS AT TROYES,  
I BELIEVE...



AMONG THE PASSENGERS FROM THE EXPRESS WAS A YOUNG MAN NAMED SAMMY BARNETT, A MAN WITH A CAMERA AND A NOSE FOR NEWS.



WHAT A SCOOP!  
BY GOLLY, IF  
ONLY I COULD GET  
THESE PICTURES  
BACK TO  
FLEET STREET!

AND THEN SAMMY NOTICED THE AIRMAN, WHO HAD BEEN APPROACHED BY THE GUARD FROM THE WRECKED TRAIN.



M'SIEUR...  
A CRANE IS NEEDED  
YOU UNDERSTAND. IS  
IT POSSIBLE FOR  
YOU TO TAKE  
A MESSAGE TO  
TROYES?

TO TROYES...  
WHY, YES I  
WAS GOING THERE,  
ANYWAY!

AN IDEA SPARKED IN SAMMY'S MIND AND HE SCRAMBLED AFTER DON MANNION...



HEY...  
I SAY!  
CAN I COME  
WITH YOU?  
IT'S DARNED  
IMPORTANT...

THE REAR COCKPIT OF THE DH4 WAS EMPTY... AND THERE WAS NO TIME FOR LENGTHY EXPLANATIONS, ANYWAY.

HOP IN,  
THEN...

WILLING HANDS MANHANDLED THE PLANE  
AROUND AND THEY TOOK OFF ...

TROYES...  
HOW FAR'S THAT  
FROM LONDON? IT'S  
THREE O'CLOCK NOW...  
THE PAPER'S DEADLINE  
IS EIGHT O'CLOCK.  
FIVE HOURS...





DON STARED AT THE LITTLE MAN. HE HAD ALMOST FORGOTTEN HIS EAGER PASSENGER IN THE CONFUSION.

FIFTY POUNDS? WHY, WHO D'YOU WANT ME TO MURDER...?

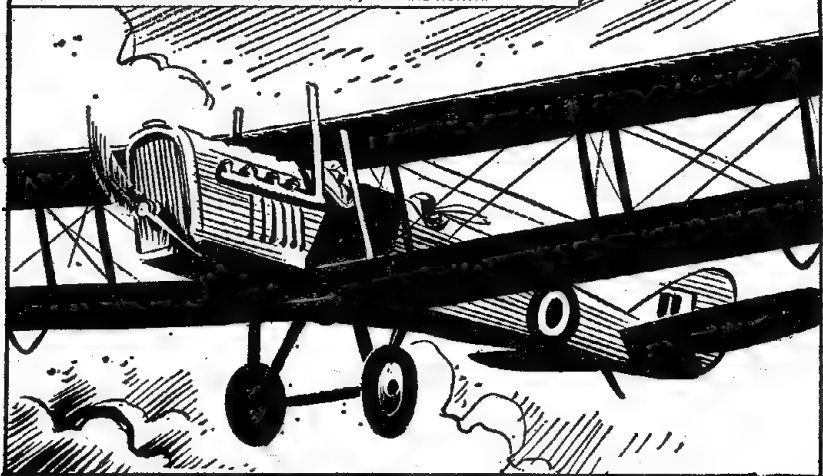
NOTHING LIKE THAT! I WORK FOR THE LONDON CLARION, YOU SEE. GET ME AND MY PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE CRASH BACK TO LONDON BY EIGHT O'CLOCK TONIGHT... AND MY PAPER WILL PAY YOU FIFTY QUID. HOW ABOUT IT, EH?

A THREE-HUNDRED MILE FLIGHT IN FOUR HOURS... A LANDING AT CROYDON AT NIGHT. IT WAS NOT IMPOSSIBLE!

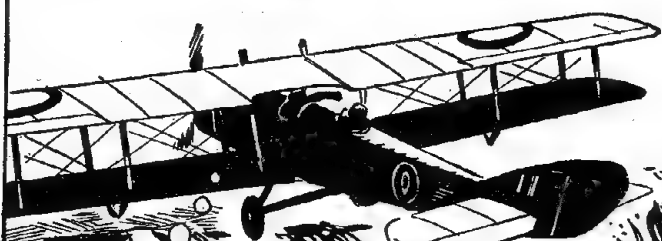
I WAS HEADING FOR BLIGHTY... EVEN IF I WASN'T AIMING TO GET THERE TODAY. FIFTY POUNDS, EH? ALL RIGHT... YOU'RE ON!



THE PLANE WAS REFUELLED. DON MANNION MADE A CAREFUL CHECK OF THE MOTOR AND THE CONTROLS AND THEY SET OFF, HEADING NORTH.



THE HOURS SPED BY ... THE MILES MORE SLOWLY, IT SEEMED. THE SUN WAS SINKING BEFORE THE LITTLE PLANE REACHED THE WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER...



THOSE  
HEAD-WINDS  
SLOWED US BADLY ...  
AND THERE'S  
STILL SEVENTY  
MILES  
TO GO...

THE LIGHT HAD FADED ALTOGETHER BEFORE THEY REACHED CROYDON, IN 1922, THE NEAREST AIRPORT TO LONDON.



ARE...  
ARE YOU  
SURE IT'S  
CROYDON?  
THERE AREN'T  
ANY  
LIGHTS.

WELL,  
THERE'S NOT  
MUCH FLYING  
DONE AT NIGHT,  
YOU SEE. IT'S  
REGARDED AS  
RATHER  
DANGEROUS...

SAMMY GULPED AND STARED OVER THE EDGE OF THE COCKPIT INTO THE YAWNING BLACKNESS.

B-BY  
GOLLY!  
I CAN  
BELIEVE  
IT IS!



ON THE GRASS OF THE AERODROME, TWO MEN STOOD BESIDE A CAR... AND LOOKED UP ANXIOUSLY.

WELL,  
THEY'RE  
HERE! BUT  
HOW THE  
DEVIL CAN  
THE PILOT  
HOPE TO  
LAND  
SAFELY?

THE HEADLIGHTS...  
SWITCH ON THE CAR'S  
HEADLIGHTS! MAYBE  
THAT'LL HELP.

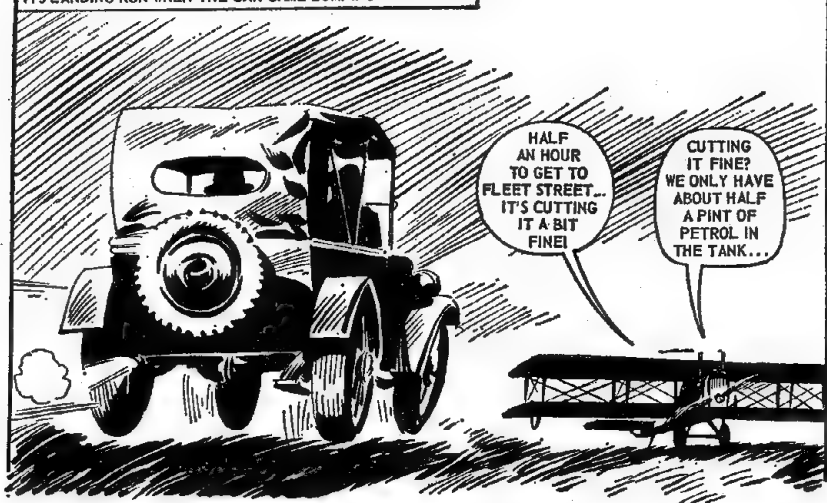


IT WAS JUST THE GUIDANCE DON MANNION NEEDED. THE DH4 GLIDED DOWN, APPEARING BRIEFLY LIKE A MOTH IN THE HEADLIGHT BEAM.

HEY,  
THAT WAS  
A SMART IDEA,  
JACK! HE'S  
DOWN SAFE AS  
HOUSES!



THE DE HAVILLAND HAD SCARCELY REACHED THE END OF ITS LANDING RUN WHEN THE CAR CAME BUMPING TOWARDS IT.



SAMMY BARNETT PILED OUT OF THE COCKPIT WITH HIS CAMERA AND RAN FOR THE CAR...



TIRED AFTER THE LONG FLIGHT, THEN THE NIGHT LANDING, DON COULD ONLY LOOK RUEFULLY AFTER SAMMY ...



DON FOUND LODGINGS AND WENT TO BED. NEXT MORNING, HIS LANDLADY BROUGHT IN A COPY OF THE NEWSPAPER WITH HIS CUP OF TEA...



SHE HANDED HER LODGER THE NEWSPAPER...



HE HAD RETURNED TO THE AIRFIELD AND WAS SERVICING  
THE DE HAVILLAND LATER IN THE MORNING, WHEN...



SAMMY BARNETT TOOK HIS WALLET OUT OF HIS POCKET...







FOR TWO DAYS AFTER THAT, DON WAITED AND FRETTED... AND THEN...

...BUT WHERE  
ARE WE  
GOING, SAMMY?

DUBLIN, OF COURSE...  
THERE'S REAL TROUBLE  
BREWING UP THERE. AND  
WHERE THERE'S TROUBLE...  
THERE'S NEWS!

THERE WAS FIERCE FIGHTING IN THE STREETS OF  
IRELAND'S CAPITAL CITY THAT TROUBLED YEAR.

HEY,  
THIS IS  
GOOD ACTION  
STUFF, ISN'T  
IT? THIS WAY,  
MANNION...



BUT SAMMY BARNETT SEEMED TO KNOW NO FEAR WHEN HE WAS ON THE SCENT OF A SCOOP...



TWO BURLY IRISHMEN CHARGED  
TOWARDS SAMMY AND DON...



DON SWUNG THE HEAVY LEATHER CAMERA  
CASE HE WAS HOLDING ...



A HARD PUNCH ROCKED THE OTHER IRISHMAN BACK ON HIS HEELS...

GET  
GOING,  
SAMMY! IT'S  
TOO HOT  
HERE NOW!



THEN OVERWHELMING WEIGHT OF NUMBERS BREACHED THE BARRICADE ... AND THE TWO ENGLISHMEN TOOK TO THEIR HEELS ...

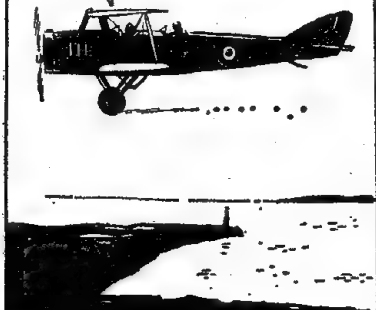
BUT I  
COULD HAVE  
GOT MORE  
PICTURES...

YOU'D  
HAVE RISKED  
GETTING YOUR  
CAMERA BUSTED!  
IT WOULDN'T  
HAVE BEEN  
WORTH IT!



DON DRAGGED THE RELUCTANT CAMERAMAN TO THE AIRFIELD AND BUNDLED HIM ABOARD...

YOU WANT THOSE PICTURES OF YOURS TO CATCH TOMORROW'S EDITION, DON'T YOU? SO PACK UP MOANING!



ONCE AGAIN, SAMMY BARNETT'S PRESS PHOTOGRAPHS HIT THE FRONT PAGE OF THE 'CLARION'...

FINE WORK, BARNETT... FINE WORK!



HENRY ARNOLD, THE EDITOR OF THE FAMOUS LONDON NEWSPAPER, BEAMED AT SAMMY AND DON...

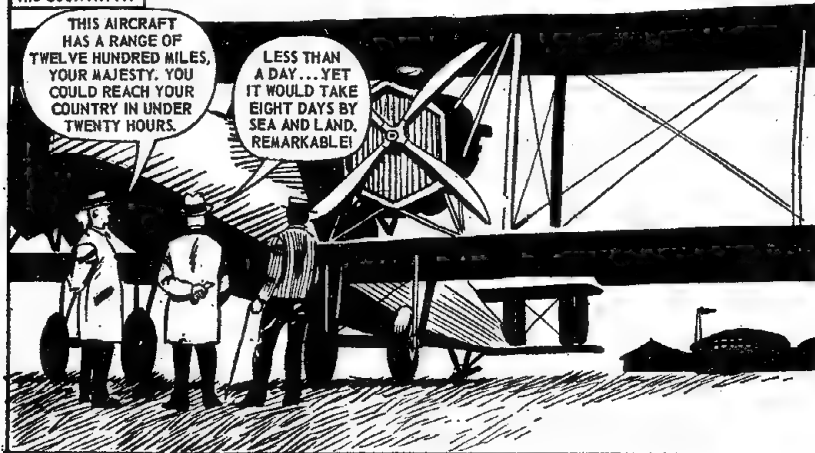
WE'VE SCOOPED EVERY LONDON PAPER BY A FULL TWENTY-FOUR HOURS! A MAGNIFICENT ACHIEVEMENT!







AVIATION WAS REALLY BEGINNING TO SPREAD ITS WINGS! IN AUGUST, THE KING OF MONGRAVIA, WHO HAD BEEN LIVING IN EXILE IN ENGLAND, WAS ALSO LOOKING INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF FLYING BACK TO HIS COUNTRY...



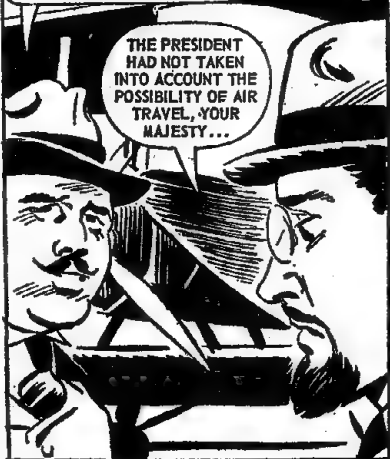
THE KING'S AIDE PRESSED FORWARD...

SPEED IS ESSENTIAL, YOUR MAJESTY, FOR YOUR PEOPLE VOTE IN FOUR DAYS' TIME WHETHER MONGRAVIA RETURNS TO THE MONARCHY OR REMAINS A REPUBLIC.

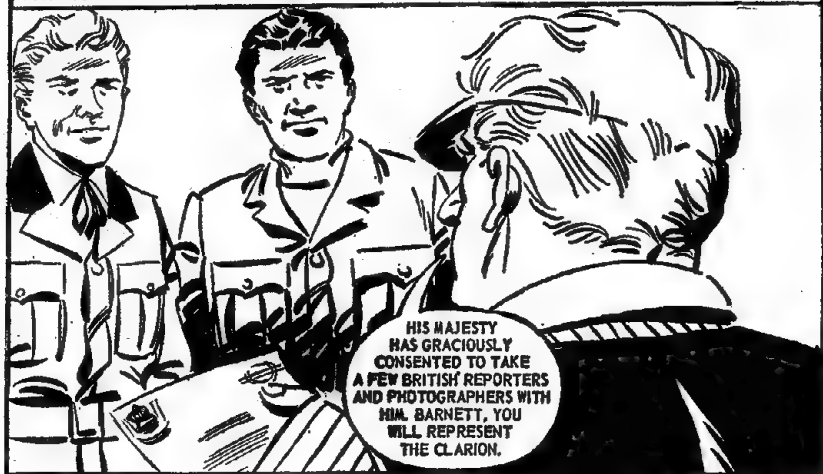


YES, IT WAS A CUNNING MOVE OF ALGARDO'S TO SPRING THIS REFERENDUM ON US, THINKING IT WOULD NOT GIVE ME TIME TO RETURN AND SHOW MYSELF TO MY PEOPLE.

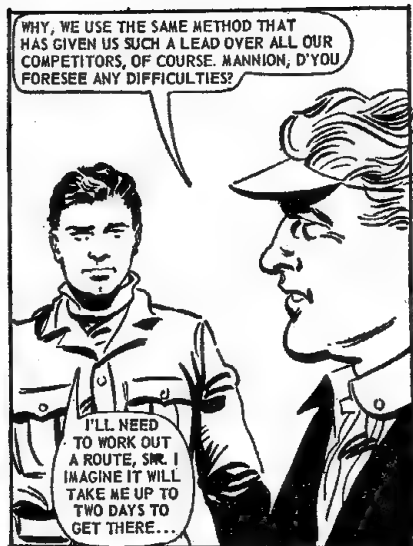
THE PRESIDENT HAD NOT TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY OF AIR TRAVEL, YOUR MAJESTY...



THE HANDLEY-PAGE 0/400, USED DURING THE WAR TO CARRY A BOMB-LOAD OF THREE TONS, HAD BEEN ADAPTED TO CARRY TWELVE PEOPLE.



HIS MAJESTY HAS GRACIOUSLY CONSENTED TO TAKE A FEW BRITISH REPORTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS WITH HIM. BARNETT, YOU WILL REPRESENT THE CLARION.



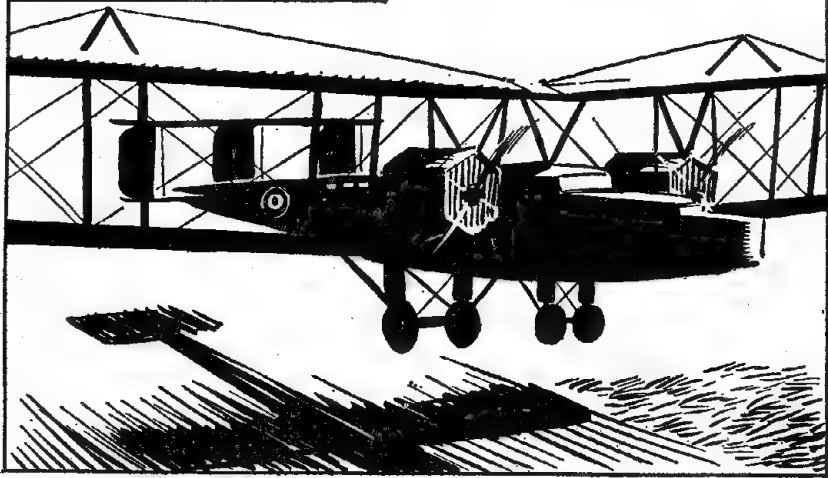
NEXT DAY, BEFORE A BATTERY OF PRESS CAMERAS, THE KING SET OFF FOR HIS HOMELAND...



DON WOULD BE FLYING OFF AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME IN THE OLD DH4.



WITH A THUNDEROUS ROAR OF HER TWO ENGINES,  
THE HANDLEY-PAGE LUMBERED INTO THE AIR...



WHEN THEY WERE AIRBORNE, THE KING OF  
MONGRAVIA GREETED HIS GUESTS ...

PLEASE MAKE  
YOURSELVES COMFORTABLE,  
GENTLEMEN. WE HAVE  
A LONG FLIGHT  
BEFORE US...



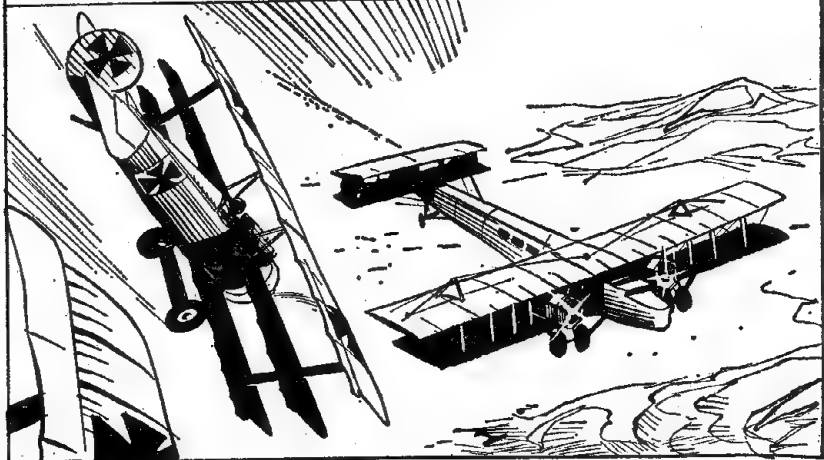
THE HUGE PLANE DRONED ACROSS FRANCE, ONLY PUTTING  
DOWN BRIEFLY TO REFUEL. THEN, ON TO THE MIDDLE EAST...



BEFORE LONG, A THOUSAND SQUARE MILES OF DESERT AND BARREN HILLS STRETCHED BELOW IT. THERE DID NOT SEEM TO BE ANOTHER LIVING THING IN THE WORLD...UNTIL....



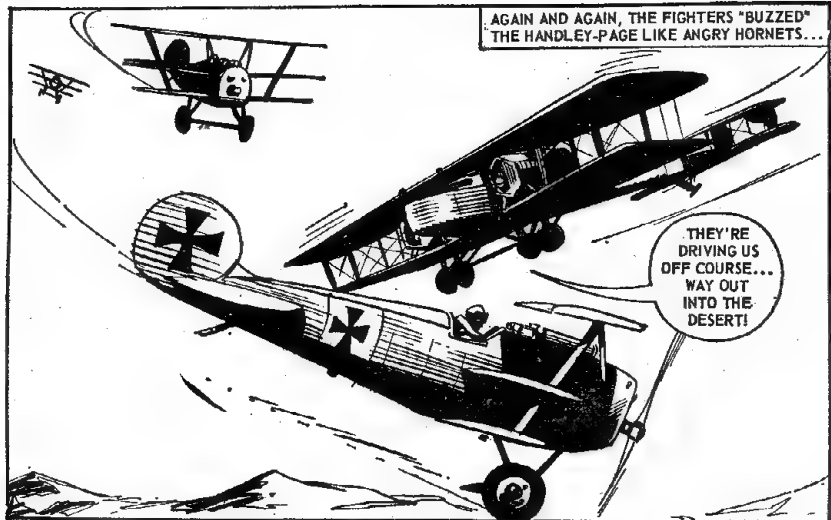
THREE FAST FIGHTER PLANES, FOKKER TRI-PLANES OF THE WARTIME GERMAN AIR FORCE, SWOOPED IN TOWARDS THE HANDLEY-PAGE...



THE PILOT OF THE ROYAL AIRCRAFT GAVE A CRY OF ALARM...



AGAIN AND AGAIN, THE FIGHTERS "BUZZED"  
THE HANDLEY-PAGE LIKE ANGRY HORNETS...



VIEWS FROM INSIDE THE FUSELAGE,  
THE ATTACKS WERE FRIGHTENING, BUT  
SAMMY BARNETT'S HANDS WERE STEADY  
ENOUGH AS HE USED HIS CAMERA.

I DON'T  
KNOW WHO THEY  
ARE OR WHAT THEIR GAME  
IS, BUT THEY'RE GETTING  
SO CLOSE, I CAN COUNT  
THE HAIRS IN  
THAT PILOT'S  
MOUSTACHE!

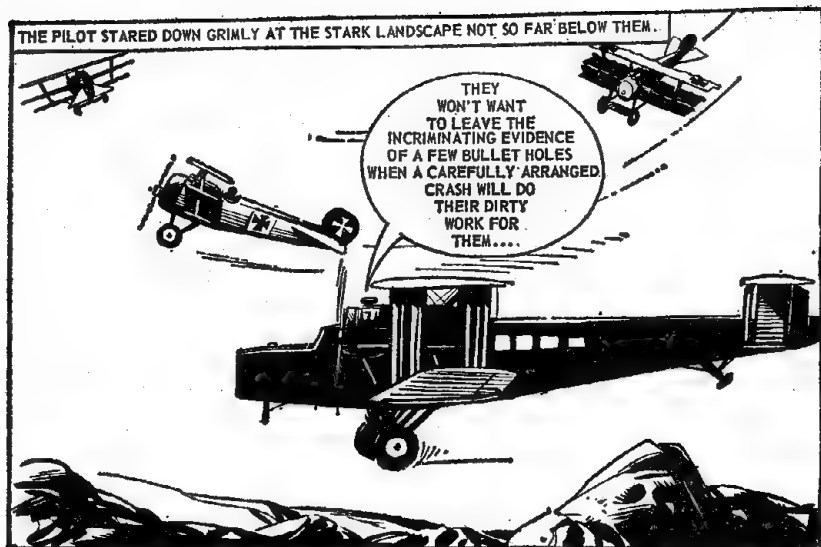
THE ROYAL PASSENGER HAD NOT  
PANICKED, BUT A FEW WORDS WITH HIS  
HARASSED PILOT DID NOTHING TO  
ALLAY HIS ANXIETY.

IT SEEMS  
MY ENEMIES  
DO NOT MEAN ME  
TO RETURN TO  
MONGRAVIA. IT IS  
ONLY SURPRISING  
THEY HAVE NOT  
SHOT US DOWN  
ALREADY.

THE SWINE  
ARE FORCING  
ME TO FLY LOWER  
AND LOWER, YOUR  
MAJESTY. IF ONLY  
WE'D STILL GOT  
THAT FORWARD  
MACHINE GUN  
FITTED...



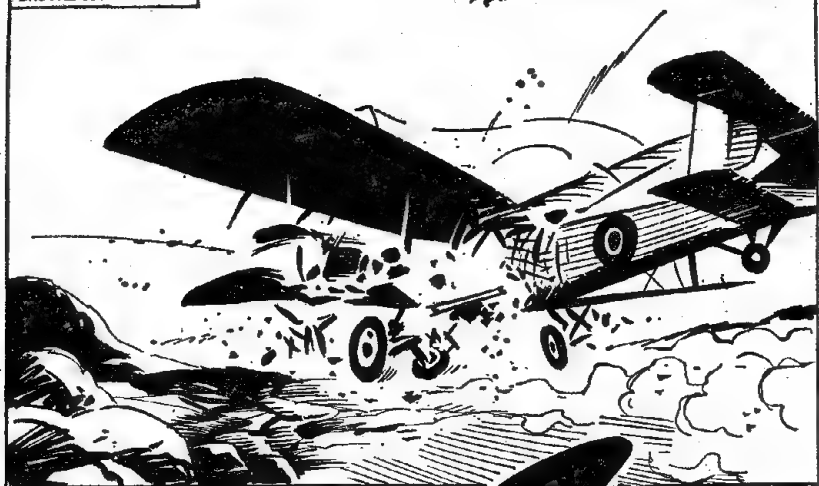
THE PILOT STARED DOWN GRIMLY AT THE STARK LANDSCAPE NOT SO FAR BELOW THEM.



THEY WERE 150 MILES OFF COURSE... AND THE EFFORTS OF THE FIGHTERS WERE BECOMING MURDEROUSLY OBVIOUS...

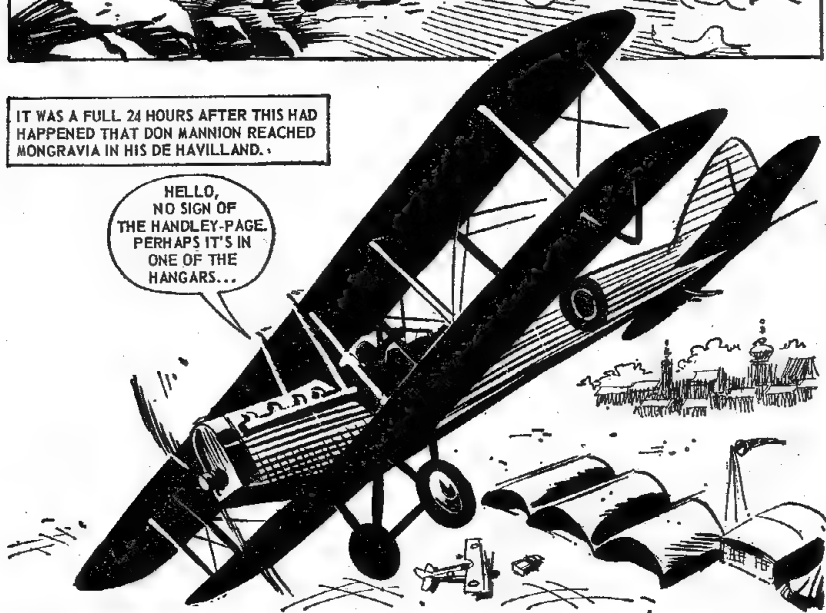


THE END CAME WITH  
BRUTAL SUDDENNESS...



IT WAS A FULL 24 HOURS AFTER THIS HAD  
HAPPENED THAT DON MANNION REACHED  
MONGRAVIA IN HIS DE HAVILLAND.

HELLO,  
NO SIGN OF  
THE HANDLEY-PAGE.  
PERHAPS IT'S IN  
ONE OF THE  
HANGARS...



IT DID NOT TAKE LONG FOR DON TO LEARN TO HIS HORROR THAT THE KING'S AIRCRAFT HAD FAILED TO ARRIVE.

HIS MAJESTY SHOULD HAVE GOT HERE YESTERDAY. YOU FOLLOWED THE SAME ROUTE, MISTER MANNION?

AS FAR AS I KNOW! THEY MUST HAVE HAD A FORCED LANDING, BUT I SAW NO SIGN OF THEM...

THE BRITISH PILOT WAITED IMPATIENTLY, BUT HOUR FOLLOWED HOUR; AND THERE WAS NO NEWS...

I'LL GO MAD IF I JUST SIT AROUND HERE! AT LEAST I CAN FLY BACK SOME WAY ALONG THE ROUTE...

THE FEW OTHER AIRCRAFT IN THE COUNTRY WERE ALREADY INVOLVED IN THE HUNT, BUT THE AREA THEY COULD SEARCH WAS LIMITED BY THEIR RANGE.

TIME'S RUNNING OUT IF THE KING'S GOING TO REACH MONGRAVIA BEFORE THE PEOPLE VOTE. I DON'T GIVE MUCH FOR HIS CHANCES NOW...

IN RAGRAT, THE CAPITAL, THE KING'S RIVAL FOR POWER  
IN MONGRAVIA, WAS OF THE SAME OPINION AS DON...

ONLY  
TWELVE HOURS  
TO GO, MY PRESIDENT ...  
AND I HEAR THE KING'S  
PARTY ARE SEEKING A  
POSTPONEMENT OF  
THE REFERENDUM.

POSTPONEMENT!  
I'LL HAVE NONE OF IT!  
THE PEOPLE MUST VOTE AS  
IT HAS BEEN ARRANGED.  
AND TOMORROW...

PRESIDENT ALGARDO GAVE A HARSH LAUGH...

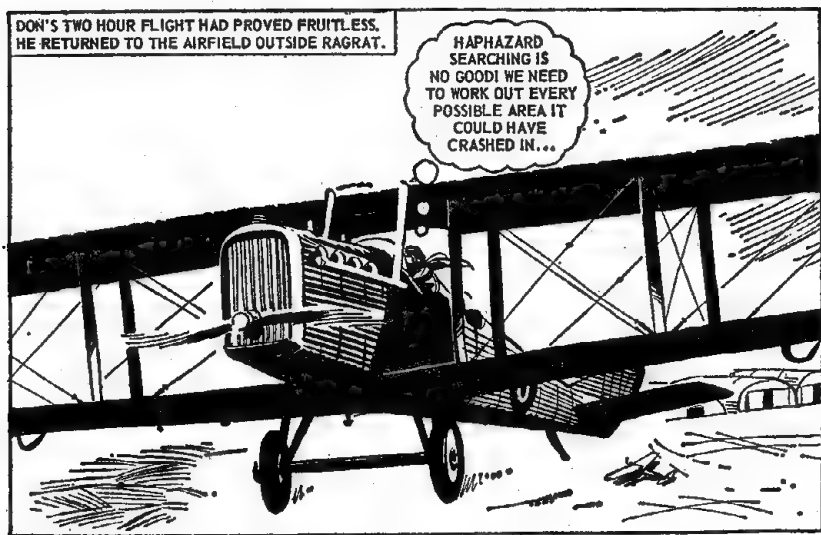
... TOMORROW, MONGRAVIA  
SHALL BE MINE! AND MY FIRST  
PLEASANT DUTY WILL BE TO  
ARRANGE A STATE FUNERAL  
FOR OUR MUCH LAMENTED  
KING. NOT THAT THE BODY  
IS LIKELY TO BE FOUND VERY  
EASILY, EH, KARLON?

MOST REGRETTABLE,  
MY PRESIDENT ...

REMINDE ME ALSO, MY DEAR KARLON,  
TO PROMOTE OUR GOOD FRIEND, MAJOR  
HELMSTADT. MONGRAVIA'S - AH - AIR  
FORCE IS FORTUNATE TO HAVE A  
LEADER OF SUCH DECISION  
AND TACT ...



DON'S TWO HOUR FLIGHT HAD PROVED FRUITLESS. HE RETURNED TO THE AIRFIELD OUTSIDE RAGRAT.



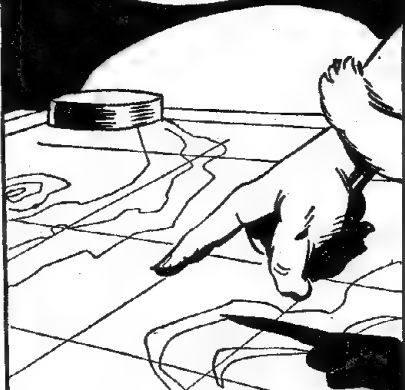
WITH THE AID OF LARGE-SCALE MAPS, DON STUDIED THE WILD AND BARREN COUNTRYSIDE OF MONGRAVIA...

NORTH OF THE OBVIOUS ROUTE ARE THE ALPS. NO PILOT IN HIS SENSES WOULD GO TOO NEAR THEM. AND SOUTH THERE'S THE DESERT.

BUT PILOTS OF MONGRAVIA'S AIR FORCE WERE PATROLLING THAT AREA. THEY REPORTED NO SIGN OF THE KING'S AIRCRAFT.



IT'S EASY ENOUGH TO MISS A SIGHTING... EVEN FOR EXPERIENCED PILOTS. FOR MY MONEY, THAT'S THE AREA TO SEARCH!



DON SET OFF BY HIMSELF ON A COURSE THAT WOULD TAKE HIM TO THE HEART OF THE DESERT TWO HUNDRED MILES FROM RAGRAT.

THE ENGLISHMEN ARE SOMETIMES LIKENED TO BULLDOGS BECAUSE OF THEIR STUBBORN DETERMINATION. MISTER MANNION IS INDEED ONE OF THESE...

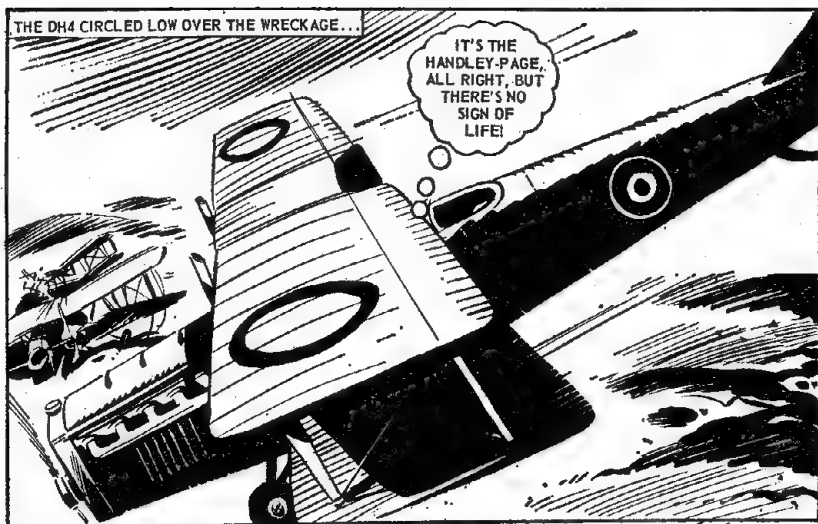
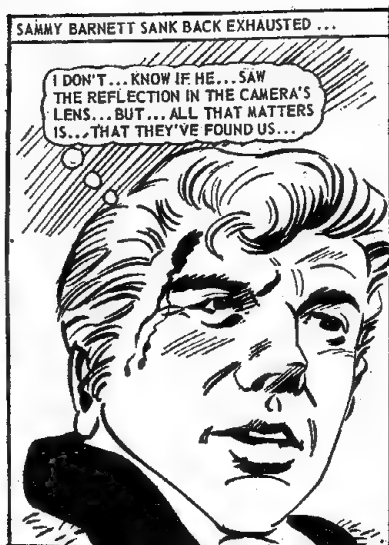


IT NEEDED ALL THE YOUNG PILOT'S DOGGED RESOLUTION, HOWEVER, TO SUSTAIN THE SEARCH OVER THE MONOTONOUS AND SEEMINGLY LIMITLESS DESERT.

I DAREN'T  
GO ANY FARTHER.  
AS IT IS, I SHAN'T  
HAVE ENOUGH FUEL  
TO GET ME  
BACK TO  
RAGRAT...

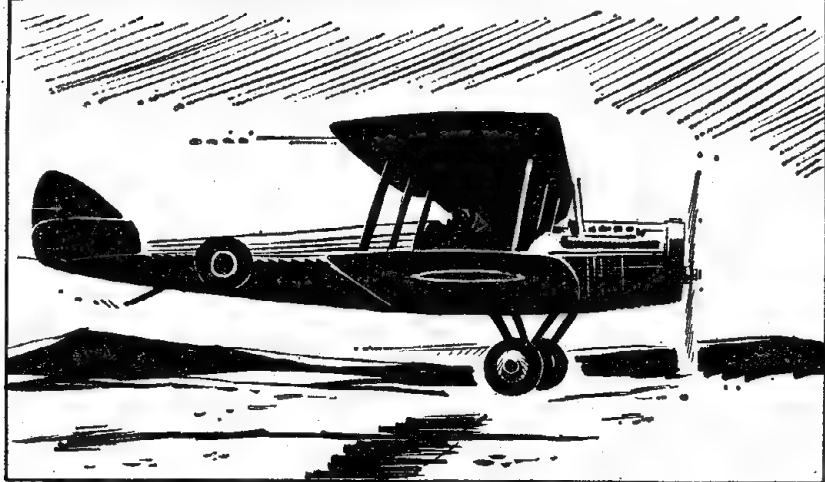
HE WAS BANKING THE DE HAVILLAND RELUCTANTLY AWAY... WHEN SUDDENLY...







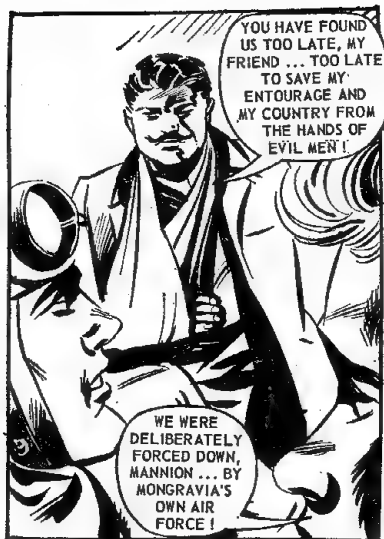
DESPITE THE RAPIDLY FAILING LIGHT, DON FOUND A RELATIVELY  
FLAT STRETCH OF GROUND A FEW HUNDRED YARDS FROM THE WRECK...



HE HURRIED AS FAST AS HIS TIRED LEGS WOULD TAKE  
HIM TO THE SHATTERED REMAINS OF WOOD AND FABRIC...







THE WIRELESS HAD BEEN BADLY KNOCKED ABOUT IN THE CRASH, BUT THE EX-FLYING CORPS PILOT MANAGED TO GET A SPARK OF LIFE FROM IT.



THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE DON MANNION COULD ATTEMPT...  
AND THAT WAS TO FLY THE KING TO RAGRAT HIMSELF!

I'M SORRY,  
SAMMY... THERE'S  
ONLY ROOM FOR THE  
KING. WILL YOU  
BE ALL RIGHT  
OVERNIGHT?

I'LL BE  
ALL RIGHT,  
MANNION. BUT  
THERE IS ONE THING  
YOU CAN DO FOR ME!  
THE PHOTOS I TOOK OF  
THE PLANES ATTACKING  
US. SEE THEY REACH  
FLEET STREET  
WHATEVER ELSE  
HAPPENS!

BEFORE HE COULD TAKE OFF, DON HAD TO SYPHON PETROL FROM THE RUPTURED TANKS OF THE  
HANDLEY-PAGE AND REFUEL HIS OWN PLANE. AT LAST ...

READY,  
YOUR MAJESTY?  
I'M AFRAID IT  
MIGHT BE A  
TRIFLE  
BUMPY.

NO MATTER,  
MISTER MANNION.  
FORGET THAT I AM  
WITH YOU. YOU HAVE  
ENOUGH DIFFICULTIES  
TO CONTEND  
WITH.

NOT FOR ONE MOMENT DID THE STURDY LIBERTY MOTOR OF THE DH4 FALTER, BUT IT WAS THE MOST NERVE-WRACKING TAKE-OFF OF DON'S EXPERIENCE...

PHEW!  
THAT WAS  
CLOSE!



HE TURNED ON TO A COMPASS BEARING FOR RAGRAT AND SETTLED DOWN TO FIGHT HIS BODY'S NEED FOR SLEEP.

FIFTEEN  
OUT OF THE  
LAST TWENTY-FOUR  
HOURS IN THE AIR...  
AND I'M REALLY  
BEGINNING TO  
FEEL IT!



ON THROUGH THE DARKNESS AND INTO THE FALSE LIGHT OF EARLY DAWN. AND THEN SUDDEN SHOCK CHASED THE SLEEP AWAY...

GOOD GRIEF!

ONLY THE HAIR-TRIGGER REFLEXES OF A TRAINED PILOT SAVED THE DH4 THEN...

TWO...NO,  
THREE OF THE  
SWINE! AND  
THEY MEAN  
BUSINESS!

HE DIVED LOW, TWISTING AND TURNING LIKE A SPARROW WITH THREE HAWKS ON ITS TAIL.

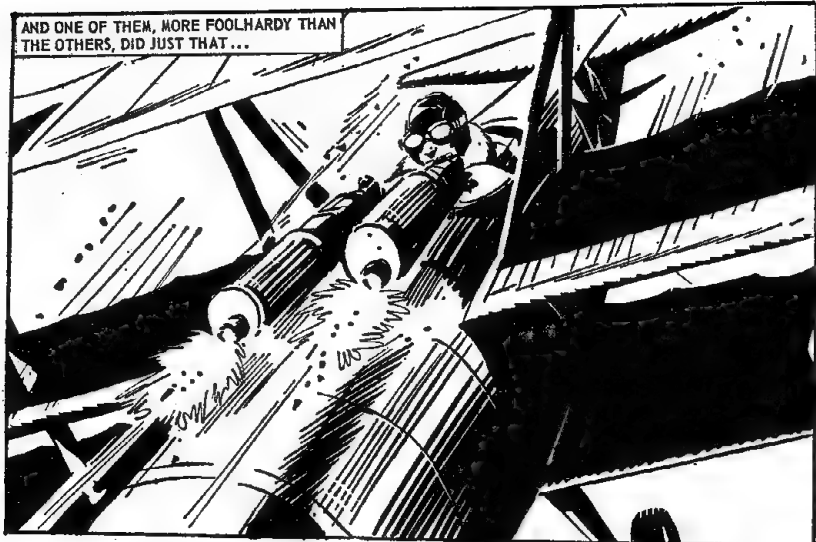


THE WINGS OF THE DH4 SCRAPPED THE SIDE OF THE NARROW GORGE AND THE ROAR OF ITS ENGINE BATTERED BACK FROM THE ROCK ONLY FEET AWAY.

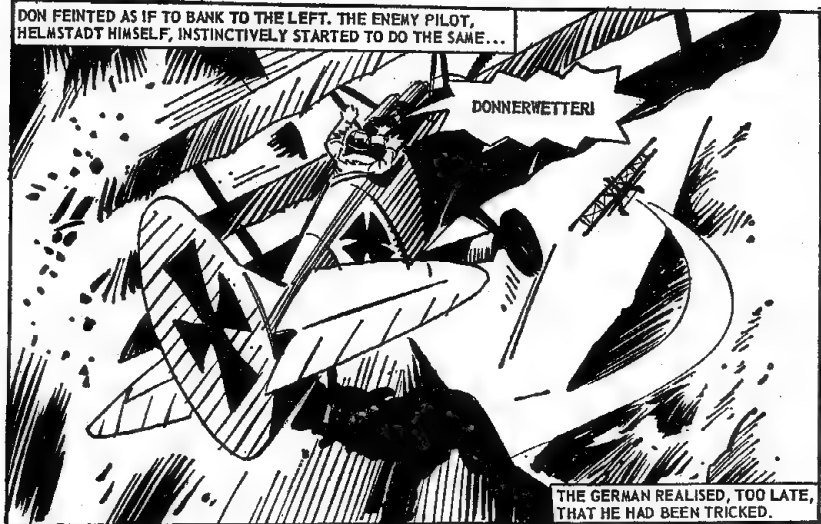
FOLLOW  
ME HERE,  
YOU BLIGHTERS...  
IF YOU  
DARE!



AND ONE OF THEM, MORE FOOLHARDY THAN THE OTHERS, DID JUST THAT ...

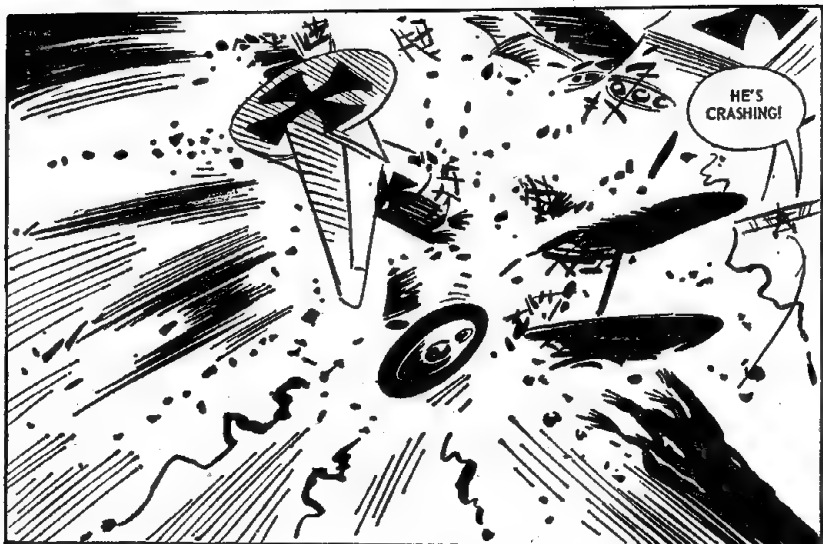


DON FEINTED AS IF TO BANK TO THE LEFT. THE ENEMY PILOT, HELMSTADT HIMSELF, INSTINCTIVELY STARTED TO DO THE SAME ...

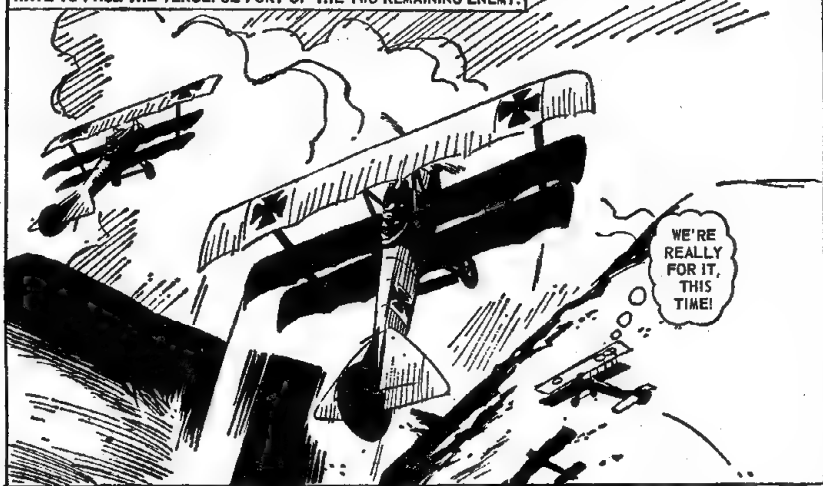


THE GERMAN REALISED, TOO LATE, THAT HE HAD BEEN TRICKED.



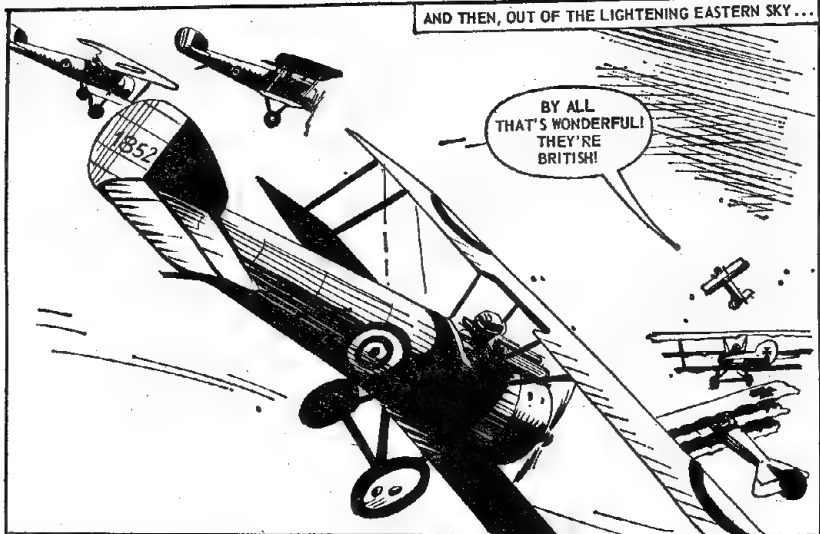


THE VALLEY WAS RUNNING OUT. THE DE HAVILLAND WOULD HAVE TO FACE THE VENGEFUL FURY OF THE TWO REMAINING ENEMY.

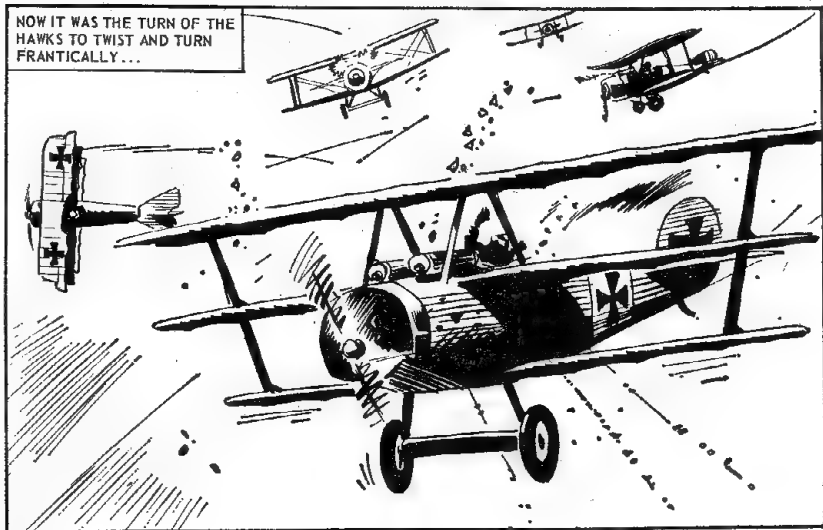


AND THEN, OUT OF THE LIGHTNING EASTERN SKY...

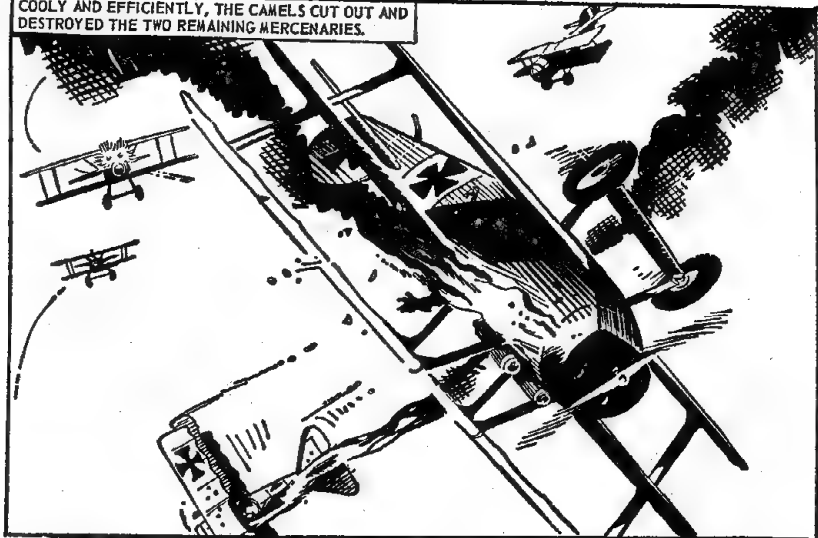
BY ALL  
THAT'S WONDERFUL!  
THEY'RE  
BRITISH!



NOW IT WAS THE TURN OF THE  
HAWKS TO TWIST AND TURN  
FRANTICALLY...



COOLY AND EFFICIENTLY, THE CAMELS CUT OUT AND DESTROYED THE TWO REMAINING MERCENARIES.

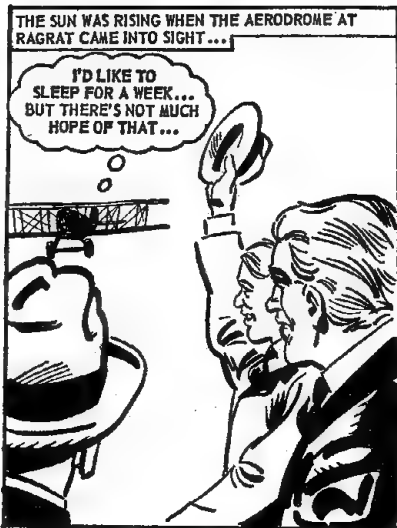


THE DH4 WAS BACK ON COURSE...AND WITH AN ESCORT FIT FOR A KING...



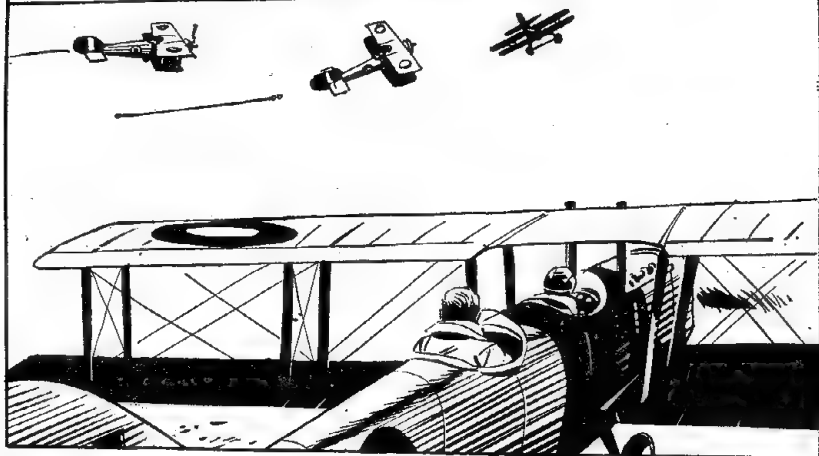
HA, MY GOOD FRIENDS, THE BRITISH! THEY WILL SEE THAT WE ARRIVE SAFELY...

THE SUN WAS RISING WHEN THE AERODROME AT RAGRAT CAME INTO SIGHT...



I'D LIKE TO SLEEP FOR A WEEK... BUT THERE'S NOT MUCH HOPE OF THAT...

THE DE HAVILLAND ROLLED TO A HALT. AS WILLING HANDS WENT TO HELP THE KING FROM THE COCKPIT, THE CAMELS DIPPED THEIR WINGS IN SALUTE....



AND THEN THERE WERE THE WELCOMING CHEERS, THE EXPLANATIONS AND THE SPEECHES...

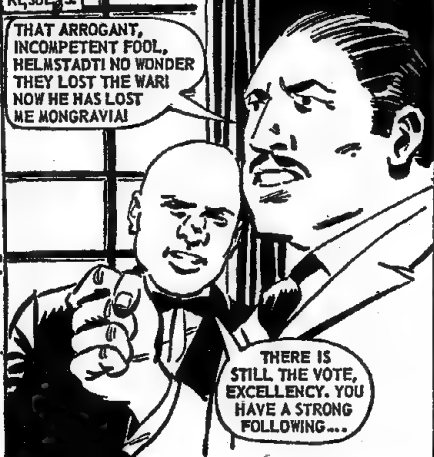




I NAME NO NAMES! BUT, THERE IS EVIDENCE IN THIS CAMERA THAT WILL POINT THE FINGER OF SUSPICION MOST SURELY AT WHOEVER IS RESPONSIBLE...

WITHIN THE HOUR, THE PHOTOGRAPHS HAD BEEN DEVELOPED AND PRINTED... AND PRESIDENT ALGARDO HAD BEEN INFORMED OF THE DAMNING RESULTS.

THAT ARROGANT, INCOMPETENT FOOL, HELMSTADT! NO WONDER THEY LOST THE WAR! NOW HE HAS LOST ME MONGRAVIA!



THERE IS STILL THE VOTE, EXCELLENCY. YOU HAVE A STRONG FOLLOWING...

BUT ALGARDO'S SUPPORT WITHERED AWAY WHEN THE PEOPLE LEARNED THAT IT WAS THE PRESIDENT'S HIRED MERCENARIES WHO HAD TRIED TO ASSASSINATE THE KING.



MONGRAVIA WILL BE GREAT AGAIN UNDER THE MONARCHY. THE KING WILL GET MY VOTE!

AYE, MINE, TOO! MURDER AND ASSASSINATION ARE THE WAYS OF THE BARBARIAN!

THE VOTING WAS STILL IN PROGRESS, ALTHOUGH THE RESULT WAS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION, WHEN DON MANNION SOUGHT AN AUDIENCE WITH THE KING ...

A FAVOUR, MISTER MANNION? IF IT IS IN MY POWER TO GRANT IT, I WILL CERTAINLY DO SO.

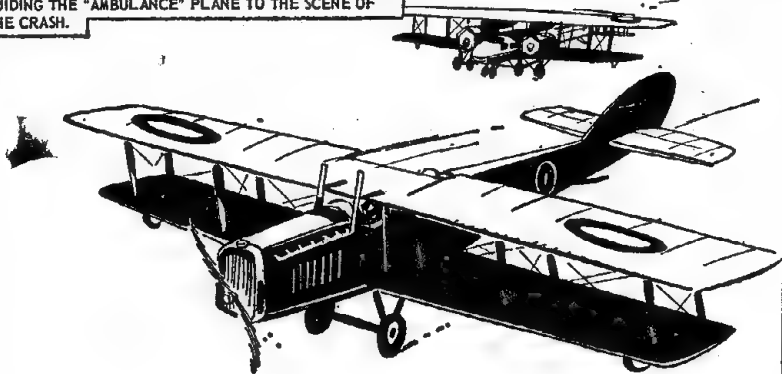
THOSE PHOTOGRAPHS SAMMY ... ER ... MISTER BARNETT, TOOK. CAN YOU ARRANGE FOR THEM TO BE SENT BACK TO ENGLAND BY AIR, YOUR MAJESTY?

THE KING NODDED ...

GLADLY! THE MOMENT THE RESULTS OF THE VOTE ARE ANNOUNCED, I SHALL BE SENDING MY ENVOY BY THE FASTEST AVAILABLE AIRCRAFT TO CLEAR UP MY AFFAIRS IN ENGLAND ...

YOUR FRIEND'S HISTORIC PICTURES, WHICH DID SO MUCH TO SWAY THE VOTE IN MY FAVOUR, SHALL GO WITH HIM ... PLUS MY PERSONAL MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE TO YOUR EDITOR.

ALTHOUGH HE STILL HAD NOT RESTED, DON INSISTED ON GUIDING THE "AMBULANCE" PLANE TO THE SCENE OF THE CRASH.



SAMMY BARNETT LAY WHERE THEY HAD LEFT HIM, WEAKER BUT STILL CONSCIOUS..HE TRIED HARD TO PULL HIMSELF UP AS HE RECOGNISED DON...



NOW DON'T GET EXCITED, SAMMY! YOUR PHOTOS HAVE ALREADY LEFT...

MANNION...  
WHAT THE BLAZES ARE YOU DOING HERE?  
WHY AREN'T YOU ON YOUR WAY BACK TO FLEET STREET WITH THE PICTURES?

AS THE INJURED BUT PLUCKY LITTLE NEWSHOUND WAS  
CARRIED TO THE "AMBULANCE" AIRCRAFT, DON EXPLAINED...

...SO  
YOU SEE,  
THEY'LL REACH  
BLIGHTY A FULL  
DAY BEFORE I COULD  
HAVE GOT THEM  
THERE IN THE OLD  
DH FOUR. WHAT'S MORE,  
WE WERE THE ONLY  
BRITISH PRESS PEOPLE  
IN MONGRAVIA WHEN  
IT BECAME A  
KINGDOM AGAIN!

THE SCOOP  
OF THE CENTURY,  
EH? THAT'S GOING  
TO TAKE SOME LIVING  
UP TO, MANNION ...  
BUT WE CAN DO  
IT, EH?



# THE GOLDEN RULE

THERE WERE TWO WHITE HUNTERS ON THE CLUB VERANDAH AS THE SAFARI COACH ARRIVED FROM NAIROBI.

HERE THEY COME  
...THE TYCOONS WITH  
TIME TO KILL AND MONEY  
TO BURN!

WHO'S COMPLAINING?  
THEY PAY OUR FEES,  
LEE...AND GIVE US  
A LIVING.

A NATIVE BROUGHT ONE OF THE NEW ARRIVALS OVER TO THE HUNTERS...

BWANA RANKIN  
...THIS GENTLEMAN  
ASKS FOR YOU...

AS YOU  
SAY, IT'S A  
LIVING!

SAMUEL J. BREKHOFF WAS A NEW YORK DIAMOND MERCHANT...A SUCCESSFUL ONE, OBVIOUSLY...

...YOU GET ANY  
CASH, RANKIN... PUT IT  
INTO DIAMONDS. THE  
MOST STABLE CURRENCY  
IN THE WORLD...

BEE-EAUTIFUL STONES! I'VE BEEN IN THE TRADE THIRTY YEARS, AND THE SPARKLE OF DIAMONDS CAN STILL GIVE ME A KICK, YOU KNOW THAT?

WELL, YOU'LL GET A DIFFERENT SORT OF KICK OUT HERE, MR. BREKHOFF... SHOOTING LIONS!

CAMP WAS SET UP OUT IN THE BUSH IN THE SHADE OF A HUGE BANYAN TREE. IT WAS STILL PRETTY HOT THERE...

TWO GOLDEN RULES TO REMEMBER WITH THE BIG CATS, MR. BREKHOFF. DON'T FOLLOW A WOUNDED ONE INTO HIGH GRASS... AND LOOK OUT FOR THE SECOND LION... THEY HUNT IN PAIRS!

I'M A CAREFUL MAN, RANKIN... I'LL NOT FORGET!

FOR A MOMENT, THE HUNTER'S EYES WERE CAUGHT BY A DARK BELT PROTRUDING ABOVE THE LEVEL OF THE DIAMOND MERCHANT'S WAISTBAND.

A MONEY-BELT! WHY'S BREKHOFF WEARING THAT?

LATER, LEE RANKIN WAS PASSING HIS  
CLIENT'S TENT WHEN A GLITTER OF  
LIGHT CAUGHT HIS EYE...

WHAT  
THE...?

THE TENT FLAP WAS OPEN A FRACTION.  
RANKIN EASED CLOSE, TREADING LIGHTLY...



THE LIGHT FLICKERED AND DANCED, REFLECTED FROM A THOUSANDS FACETS OF THE STONES.



RANKIN BACKED AWAY, HIS FACE A STONY MASK, BUT HIS EYES ALIVE WITH EVIL THOUGHTS...



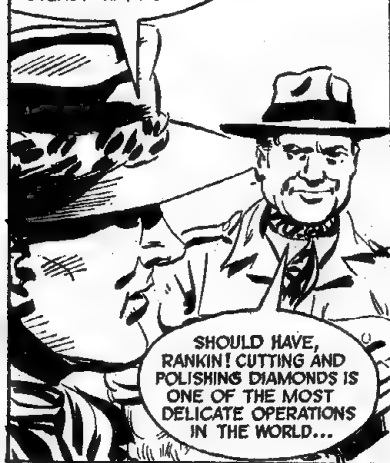
LEE RANKIN DID NOT SLEEP MUCH THAT NIGHT... BUT IT DID NOT SHOW WHEN HE AND SAMUEL J. BREKHOFF SET OFF WITH THEIR GUNS NEXT MORNING.



RANKIN KNEW HIS BUSINESS. HE GOT HIS CLIENT WITHIN SHOOTING DISTANCE OF THEIR QUARRY...



THAT'S PRETTY GOOD SHOOTING, MR. BREKHOFF. YOU'VE GOT A STEADY HAND.

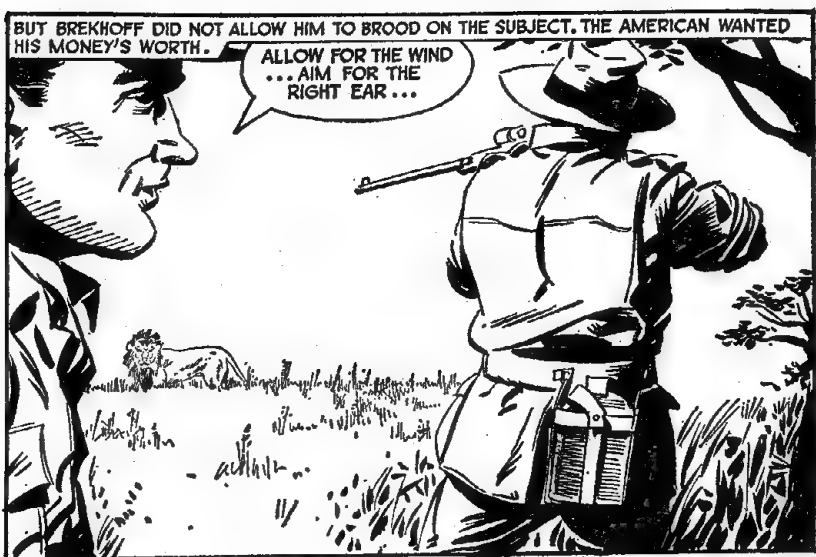


DIAMONDS! FOR A LITTLE WHILE RANKIN HAD FORGOTTEN...BUT NOW THE MEMORY OF THE GEMS HE HAD SEEN CAME BACK TO HIM.



BUT BREKHOFF DID NOT ALLOW HIM TO BROOD ON THE SUBJECT. THE AMERICAN WANTED HIS MONEY'S WORTH.

ALLOW FOR THE WIND  
... AIM FOR THE  
RIGHT EAR ...



THE RIFLE CRACKED AND THE LION SLUMPED TO THE GROUND. BREKHOFF STARTED FORWARD.



A GOOD  
HEAD, EH,  
RANKIN?

SUDDENLY, RANKIN SAW THE FALLEN LION'S TAIL TWITCH. A CRY OF WARNING ROSE TO HIS LIPS...AND WAS NEVER UTTERED...

HECK!  
IT'S ONLY  
WOUNDED!



HE WATCHED...UNMOVING...AS THE AMERICAN APPROACHED THE LION. AND THEN...

MY GRIEF  
...AAAAGH!  
HELP!

STILL RANKIN DID NOT MOVE A MUSCLE AS  
THE ENRAGED BEAST SAVAGED HIS CLIENT.  
AT LAST IT WAS OVER...AND RANKIN  
TOOK AIM...

YOU'VE  
HAD YOUR  
FUN, SIMBA  
...SORRY...

THE LION DROPPED DEAD  
... AND RANKIN BENT  
OVER THE BODY OF THE  
MAN HE HAD AS GOOD  
AS MURDERED...

I WARNED  
YOU ABOUT A  
WOUNDED CAT,  
YANK...

THE DIAMONDS SPARKLED IN THE HARSH SUNLIGHT...JUST AS THEY HAD IN THE LAMPLIGHT THE NIGHT BEFORE...

SELL 'EM ANYWHERE, HE SAID. CAN'T BE TRACED...NEVER LOSE THEIR VALUE...

AND THEN HE HEARD A SOUND...AND TURNED...

NO...  
AAAAGH!

IN HIS EXCITEMENT AND GREED, LEE RANKIN HAD FORGOTTEN HIS OWN GOLDEN RULE OF BIG GAME HUNTING... LIONS HUNT IN PAIRS!

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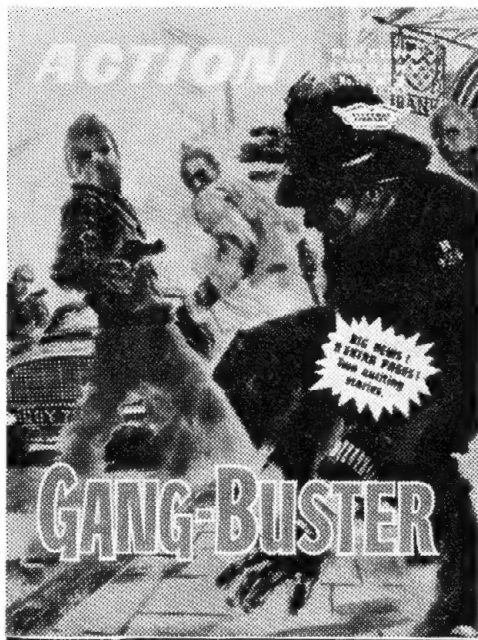


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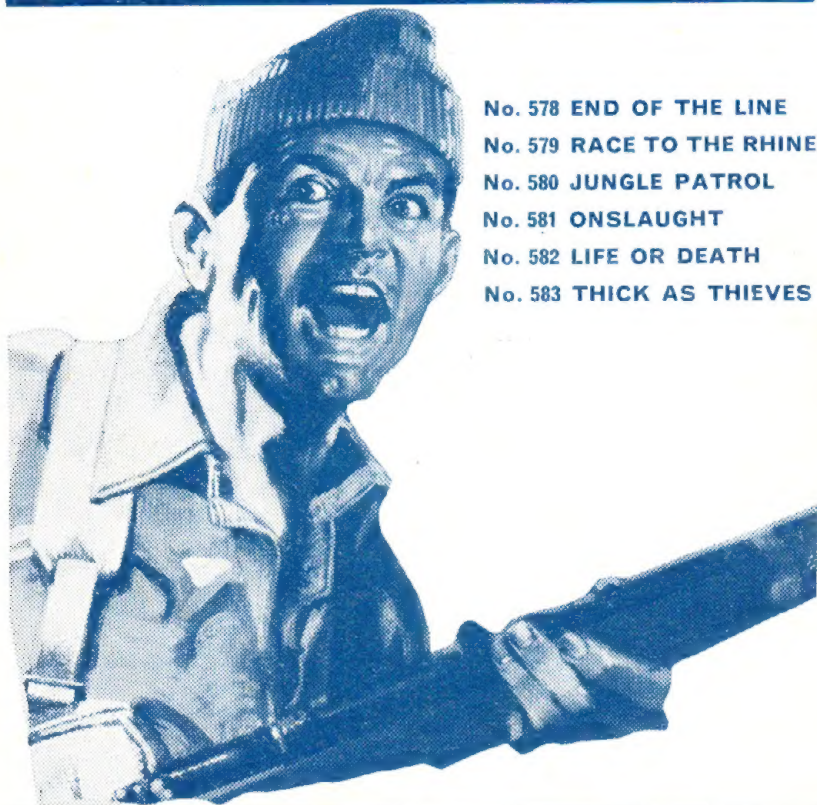
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